



WAVES FOR HOPE



Impact Report

Surf Therapy Intervention

March - August 2022, Balandra, Trinidad & Tobago

Text and images by Manuela Giger



Manuela Giger
Chris Dennis

Co-Founders and Directors

Waves for Hope is a local non-profit organization, offering youth and community development programs in under-served communities on the east-coast of Trinidad. Our mission is to reduce poverty and create better opportunities by providing education and mentorship to young people from under-served communities on the north-east coast of Trinidad.

Waves for Hope was founded in 2019 by former professional surfer Chris Dennis from Balandra and Swiss-born Manuela Giger who is an Ayurveda Nutrition and Life Coach and studied Social Innovation.

Waves for Hope is part of a **world-wide mental health alliance (Wave Alliance)**. To this day, we have worked with over 50 beneficiaries and can show a positive impact in their overall well-being.

Our vision is to see the members of our communities, especially young people, strive and create better opportunities for themselves.

We want to reduce poverty, crime and dependency while creating positive, aspiring and healthy communities.

01.



PROGRAMS



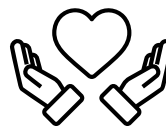
Surf Therapy

Mental health intervention to promote overall well-being.



Waves for Hope Club

Sports, workshops, learning opportunities for surf therapy graduates.



Young Leaders Training

Creating young leaders through education and training.



School assistance

School supplies, homework assistance, exam preparation.

02.

WHY SURF THERAPY?

PROBLEM

Adolescence and young adulthood are times when **growing up in poverty can hamper educational performance, increase the risk of unemployment and lead to risky behaviors**, such as substance abuse, involvement in gangs and other criminal activities.

These factors can have a **detrimental impact on the physical, emotional, and social development of young people**, threatening their life chances and risking the creation of intergenerational poverty.

SOLUTION

With the Surf Therpay intervention, Waves for Hope aims to **empower the young people of marginalized communities** and offer them opportunities to **improve their coping skills and their overall well-being** (physical, emotional and mental well-being) with the goal to **end the poverty trap and create striving communities**.



03.



PROGRAM FACTS

21 sessions, weekly between March and August 2022.

The sessions took place on **two beaches**, depending on swell size.

26 beneficiaries enrolled, of which 10 dropped out of the program:

- 1 beneficiary found a job and was unable to continue with the program,
- 1 moved to another community,
- 4 were unable to continue because the parents reconsidered
- 4 showed low attendance and were expelled from the program.

A total of **16 beneficiaries graduated** and became WFH club members.

37.5% female participation.

Beneficiaries **ages ranged from 9 to 23.**
Average age was 14.

2 young leaders plus 2 senior facilitators (mentors) lead the intervention.

A driver was employed for **transportation** to the beaches.

An average of **20 surfboards** were used during the intervention. **5 new boards** were introduced during the intervention.

04.

IMPACT

DATA COLLECTION

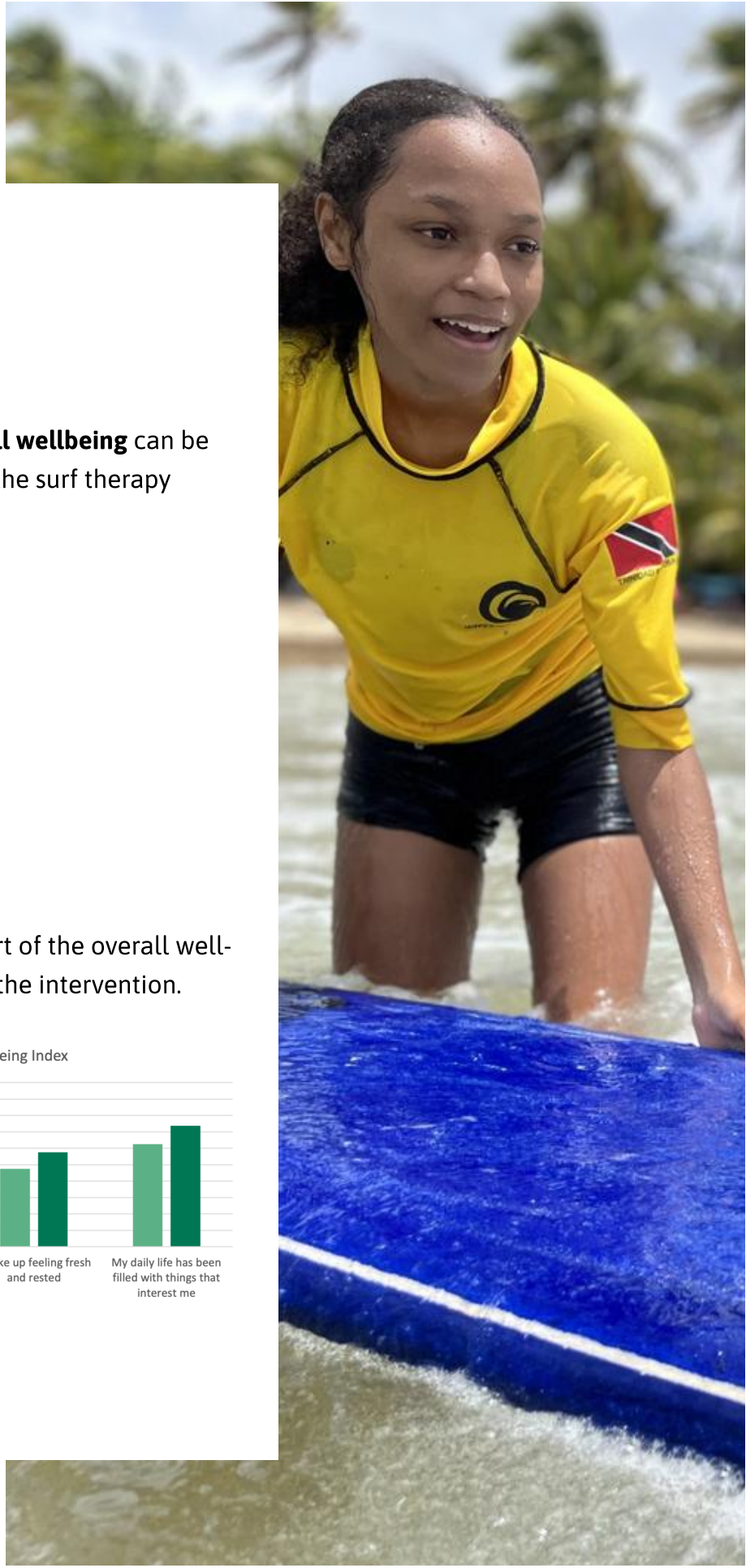
The **World Health Organisation Five Well Being Index (WHO-5)** was used in pre and post surveys to **measure current mental well-being** (time frame the previous two weeks).

The WHO-5 is suitable for children aged 9 and above. All measures were administrated before the start of the surf therapy intervention and at the end.

Session participation, duration and gender distribution was captured using an **attendance app**.

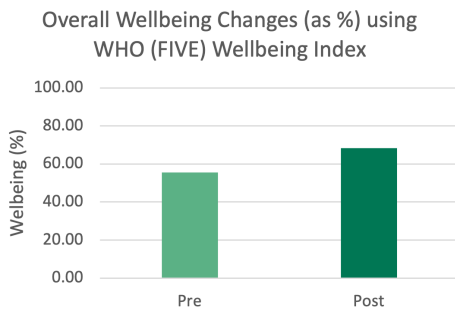
In addition, the **beneficiaries' access to social support alongside satisfaction scores** were assessed. To support the data, qualitative feedback from the beneficiaries, mentors, guardians and stakeholders was collected.



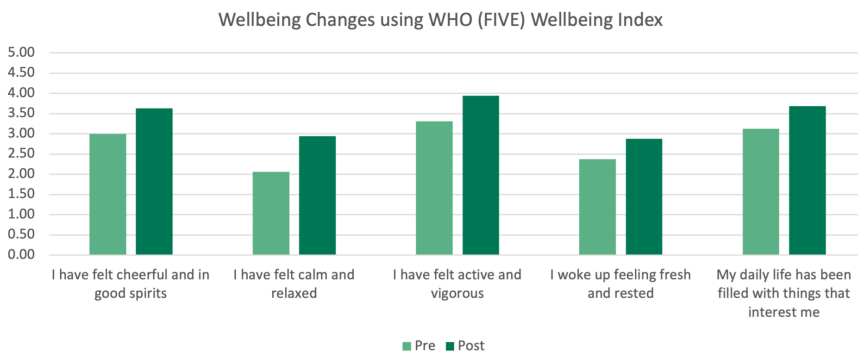


OVERALL WELL-BEING

An **significant increase of 12.75% in overall wellbeing** can be noticed in the beneficiaries at the end of the surf therapy intervention.



All individual wellbeing items that are part of the overall wellbeing index show a **positive change** after the intervention.

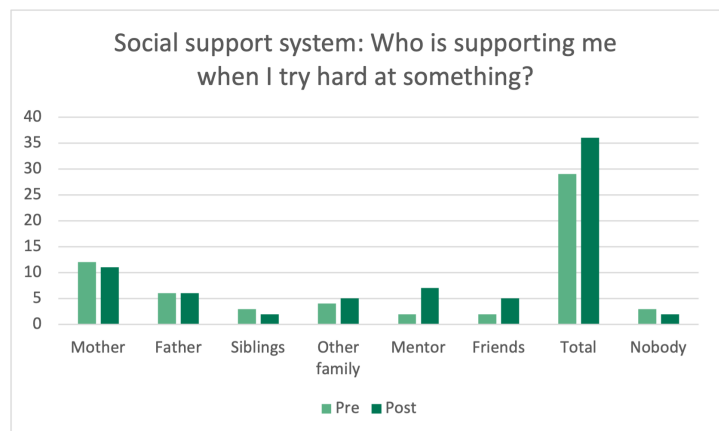
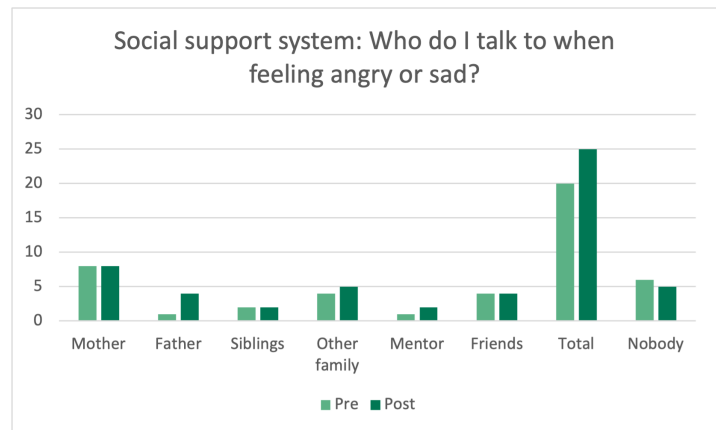




SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

A positive development can be seen in the social support system of the beneficiaries. The total number of support options went up and the item "nobody" went down.

50% of the beneficiaries indicated the mentors of the surf therapy intervention being part of their social support system.



OTHER FINDINGS

All beneficiaries indicated that they made **new friends** during the intervention.

All beneficiaries want to join the Waves for Hope Club program to continue with their surfing and spend time with their new friends.

Most of the beneficiaries live with both parents (44%). **31% of the beneficiaries live with their mother, 25% live with other relatives/other people.**

31% of the beneficiaries who graduated underwent a change in their living situation during the period of the surf therapy intervention. All beneficiaries concerned moved to other communities, and are either living with their mother or with relatives/other people.

100% of the beneficiaries noticed positive changes in themselves. These changes include learning how to communicate better, being calm in arguments, being nice to others, feeling less anxious etc.





LEARNINGS

PARENT INFORMATION

It came to our attention that parents/guardians use the surf therapy intervention as a punishment tool for their kids. More **information and collaboration between Waves for Hope and the parents** needs to happen in the future to avoid beneficiaries being banned from attending the sessions.

SESSION DEBRIEFING

In order to learn and adapt every session's curriculum, a **short debriefing will be introduced** in future surf therapy interventions. The debriefing will be used to analyze what went well and what might need improvements or adjustments.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

In addition to the surf therapy teachings based on the self-determination theory, **educational workshops will be introduced** with the next surf therapy cycle. The educational workshops will target social and health topics.

06.

QUOTES

BENEFICIARIES

"I noticed that I started to be calm in arguments."

"When I get overwhelmed at home and at school I take time by myself to meditate."

"My mentors are very encouraging, helpful and inspiring."

"I learned how to control my temper by taking deep breaths and doing a Take Five."

"My favourite thing with surf therapy is when I have fun and can surf with friends."

"It means a lot, it gives me time to clear my head of all the bad things that happened."

"The mentors are caring and they always look out for you."

"I became less aggressive and more open to hearing what others have to say."





FACILITATORS

"I believe our well being should be healthy, because it would interfere with us both mentally and physically. When we are affected, we start treating people based on how we feel. That is why we need to be positive. Do things that makes us happy and stress free. Speak to someone or do what helps you. When you are energetic, we spread that energy around us."

"I am looking forward to every Saturday, it is the best day of my whole week."

"My motivation to be a surf therapy mentor is to see all the happy faces and smiles during the sessions."

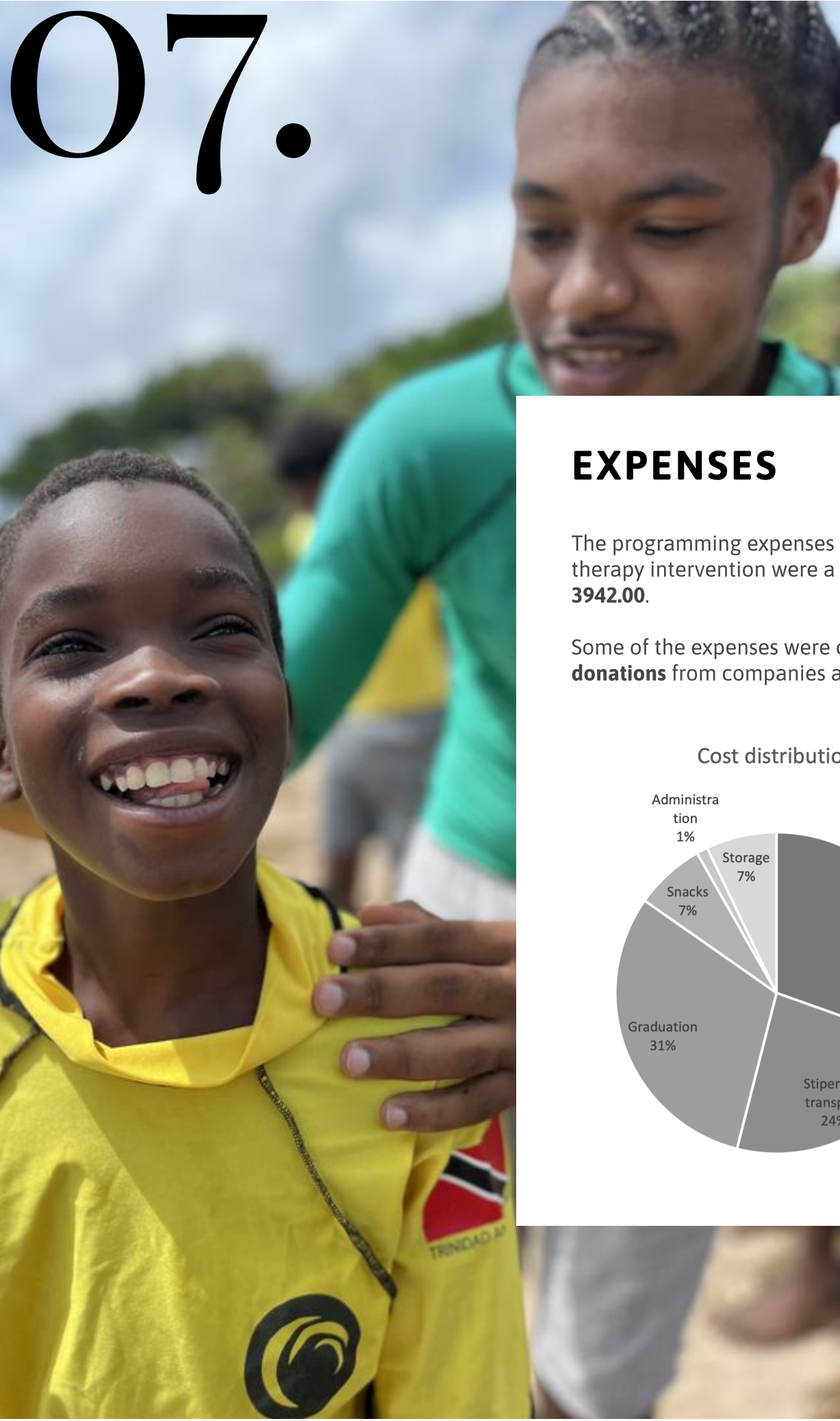
PARENTS/GUARDIANS

"It helped her with her anxiety a lot."

"He is more helpful at home and listens when I talk."

"She can't stop talk about the surfing."

07.

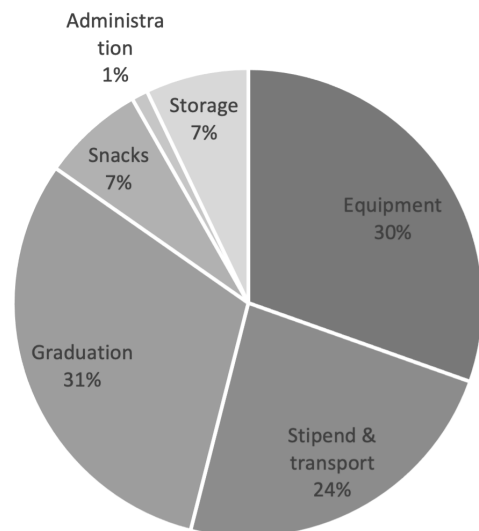


EXPENSES

The programming expenses for this surf therapy intervention were a **total of USD 3942.00**.

Some of the expenses were covered by **in-kind donations** from companies and individuals.

Cost distribution





WAVES FOR HOPE



Thank you!

Thank you to our partners and supporters:

Maritime Financial | Positive Vibe Warriors | Quota Trinidad | XM Surf | Wave Alliance | Vans | Friends & Family

www.waves-for-hope.org
info@waves-for-hope.org
[@wavesforhopetrinidad](https://www.instagram.com/wavesforhopetrinidad)

Waves for Hope
19 3/4 Toco Rd.
Balandra, Trinidad

+1 868 729 30 68
+1 868 748 94 97

Proud member of The Wave Alliance

